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SUBJECT: AMB. RICE MEETS WITH FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA  
FESTUS MOGAE

Classified By: ECOSOC: M/C Robert Hagen for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary - In a May 4 meeting between Ambassador Rice and the former President of Botswana Festus Mogae, Ambassador Rice and President Mogae discussed a range of issues including climate change, recent elections in South Africa, succession plans in Zimbabwe, and the strain of the financial crisis in Africa. - End Summary

12. (C) Ambassador Rice began by congratulating President Mogae on his recent appointment as a UN envoy for climate change, to which President Mogae responded 'it is good to have you people back in the White House'. President Mogae then outlined details of a climate change plan for Africa, stressing the importance of consensus building, mitigation, and technology transfer. President Mogae said that an Africa-specific climate change fund might become necessary if climate change intensifies, and Ambassador Rice concurred, adding that a small island fund might be equally appropriate.

13. (C) On South Africa, President Mogae said that he saw the emergence of the ANC splinter party COPE as a 'blessing in disguise', which would produce a more meaningful, robust form of democratic governance in South Africa. When asked what the United States might expect from recently elected South African President Jacob Zuma, President Mogae said that he foresaw a change in personalities, not in ANC policies. President Mogae said that he expected a more 'open-minded' South African government, with Zuma, unlike his predecessor, set to oppose a number of Mugabe-backed initiatives in SADC. President Mogae continued, saying that Mbeki's controversial stance on HIV/AIDS was borne out of 'false pride', and that Mbeki was deeply suspicious of perceived efforts on the part of western governments to paint Africans as 'corrupt and diseased' (as purportedly demonstrated in State Department travel alerts), all of which led Mbeki's government to grossly under report violence and AIDS statistics during his administration.

14. (C) On Zimbabwe, President Mogae suggested that one way to improve the current situation would be to secure a safe and comfortable retirement for President Robert Mugabe. Ambassador Rice replied that the U.S. would welcome a peaceful transition, but was concerned about who might succeed Mugabe prior to free and fair elections. President Mogae agreed with this sentiment, saying that neither Vice-President Joice Mujuru nor Housing Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa (purported front-runners in the succession race) command the fear or respect that Mugabe relies upon to lead.

15. (C) On Botswana, President Mogae said that he doesn't foresee any short-term changes in policy under President Khama, and that he expects relations between Botswana and the U.S. to remain excellent. More broadly, President Mogae said that Africa had high hopes (perhaps unrealistically high) for the Obama Administration in Africa, and recommended a continued and increased focus on PEPFAR, AGOA, and MCC.

Lastly President Mogae said that a strong 'moral imperative' remains for western governments to dramatically increase ODA flows to Africa, as Africans were not responsible for the recent economic downturn, but are bearing a disproportionately high share of its economic and social costs.

Rice